Healing the Congregation

Developed by
Denise D. Tracy

Resources for people who care about congregations.

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Healing the Congregation

Introduction

This curriculum was created for use by any congregation that has experienced clergy sexual abuse. Clergy sexual abuse is defined as the sexual involvement of a Pastor with a member of the church community.

When a congregation discovers that clergy sexual abuse has occurred, whether it is recent or in the past, there is much work to be done. Often denominational officials and lawyers handle the logistics of the ecclesiastical response. Advocates for the victim(s) and for the congregation help with caring for those most closely involved. For the next 3-5 years a considerable amount of the congregation's energy will be spent in working through the spiritual and emotional issues that have arisen in the aftermath of the discovery of clergy sexual abuse.

This curriculum is structured around several of the leading resources in the field responding to clergy sexual abuse. The curriculum has an ethical code of norms to be used for any and all group sessions. There are opening and closing prayers and Bible passages for use in each session. There are assigned readings for each session. The purpose of the curriculum is to empower the congregation to meet in small groups for the purpose of education and support. Feel free to adapt the language and theology to one that fits or is more appropriate for your congregation.

This curriculum cannot substitute for working with a consultant or another professional who would help create a plan for the 3-5 year process that must take place for healing the congregation that experiences clergy sexual abuse. This curriculum can help people articulate and understand their feelings, and can educate people in the basic issues involved in clergy sexual abuse. As a congregation works through the issues involved in clergy sexual abuse discussion can turn into disagreement. This curriculum can model how to discuss and differ without fracturing the community. This curriculum can show people how, in the aftermath of clergy sexual abuse, listening, learning and caring can begin to build support for the *Healing of the Congregation.*

Rev. Denise D. Tracy
Church Consultant
421 S. Clinton
Oak Park, IL 60302
708-383-3509

Healing the Congregation

A Curriculum for Working Towards the Healing of Pastoral Sexual Abuse

This curriculum has five sessions.

Session One

Healing the Congregation: The Healing Wheel
Understanding, accepting and listening to the variety of responses to the revelation of clergy sexual abuse.

Session Two

Congregational Healing
When abuse is discovered in a congregation there are four stages a congregation must go through to be healed. This session will work at understanding these stages.

Session Three

Is Nothing Sacred?
Looking at the book by Marie Fortune and reactions and responses.

Session Four

Is Nothing Sacred?
Continued other questions and responses.

Session Five

Boundaries/Limits
A look at boundaries in the church and how to begin clarifying who sets the limits and what the limits of the pastoral/congregant relationship might look like.

Healing the Congregation

A Curriculum for Working Towards the Healing of Pastoral Sexual Abuse

1. *Time*

   Class materials are planned for each class to last two hours.

2. *Materials*

   You will need copies of the Larry Graham article, "Healing the Congregation" for week number two. You will need copies of Marie Fortune's Book, Is Nothing Sacred? for weeks three and four. (Usually if you order more than 10 copies, you can arrange a discount.) For week number five, you will need to have copies of Donald Clark's article, "Sexual Abuse in the Church: The Law Steps In."

3. *Teams Teaching or Facilitating*

   Facilitating or teaching in teams of two is the suggested method for this curriculum. While one facilitator is responding or presenting, the other can be aware of the dynamics of the group. Watching for someone who might want to say something, but whose gesture is so hesitant that it is not noticed, seeing that someone's body language has changed during a discussion, and/or helping by clarifying for the presenting or leading facilitator all are roles of the facilitator who is not leading at any given moment.

   Trading roles gives both members of your team a chance to present and to support. The team approach models cooperation. Even if, as leaders, you model that sometimes you make a mistake, you and your co-leader will model how to clarify the confusion and resolve the differences you have. This modeling is important in a healing church to help people understand how to behave when they disagree or are confused.

4. *Facilitators' Meetings*

   Having several team-led groups running at different times concurrently is a good way to make this material available to many people. Have the facilitators meet in an orientation session so that their questions may be answered. If you are working with a consultant, she or he might be helpful as a resource in this orientation session. Having regular facilitators' meetings to process and debrief the meetings may also create a community of support for the facilitators. If someone from your group has a question that has stumped you and your co-facilitator, or if someone from your group's behavior is a problem, bring this to the facilitators' meetings.

   You might want to have a combined facilitators' meeting for an hour and then break into teams of two and do your planning for your next session at this time. If you

decide to do facilitators' meetings, take turns leading. One team might lead each facilitators' meeting.

At this point, some readers may be thinking, "This is too much time!" In the aftermath of clergy sexual abuse the church needs to rebuild its support community from within. If you have a circle where you can bring your questions and needs, you will be a better leader. If you are a better leader, your group will be more successful. Having nourished, successful leaders will help your congregation heal.

5. *Recruiting Facilitators*

The best way to recruit teachers is to directly ask people you think might have the skills to facilitate this class. A less desirable method would be making announcements asking for volunteers because sometimes people who may not be qualified may apply. If you advertise generally, you have to be prepared to turn an unqualified person away.

Another way to select teachers is to have everyone who wants to teach, take the class first and then you will have an idea of who people are and how they function in response to the material as well as to others who may react to the material differently than they do.

6. *Advertising and Publicity*

Once you have your facilitators you may start to advertise for participants. Choose several times:

a) an afternoon time for retirees or those with flexible schedules

b) at least one evening time

c) approach existing groups, ask if they would agree to create the opportunity for the class to be taught as a program for their group. (The women's group, the men's breakfast group, etc.)

- Start with two or three class offerings on different days at different times.
- Limit sign ups to 10 participants. (You can have a waiting list.)
- Facilitators need to respond to people by phone or in writing confirming the dates and times of the classes.
- In your phone calls, ask participants to be there on time, to attend each of the four class sessions and communicate that you are looking forward to being with them!

7. *Ad*

If you want to know more about how to *Heal Our Congregation,* a 4 week class will be offered at our church. The classes are built around current materials which will help participants understand and be able to respond to clergy sexual abuse or misconduct.

Class *Facilitators*

Time: _____ _____

Place: _____ _____

Class *Facilitators*

Time: _____ _____

Place: _____ _____

Class *Facilitators*

Time: _____ _____

Place: _____ _____

If you are interested you may call _____ to sign up. A sign up book will be available during coffee hour for the next several weeks. Only ten people per class. If you cannot attend this time, but are interested in a future session, let us know. Attendance at all four sessions is requested. We will begin and end on time.

Code of Ethics
or
Group Guidelines
For Healing the Congregation Curriculum

Listen. Let others finish.
(Please don't interrupt.)

Value our differences.
(Even when we disagree, we are valued.)

Use "I" statements
(Rather than "we" or "they." "I" statements help each of us own what we say.)

We are all responsible for what happens here.
(If you are uncomfortable with something, please say so.)

Respect time and timing.
(Beginning and ending on time signifies respect of others and ourselves.)

Self disclose at an appropriate level.
(This builds trust.)

What happens here, stays here.
(It's okay to share the process with others, but not to quote anyone or repeat what anyone says.)

It's okay to affirm or acknowledge others and to ask questions of clarification but let's not debate or argue.
(This material may be sensitive and other people may respond differently. Everyone has the right to their own belief.)

Everyone has the option to pass.
(You may choose not to participate in an activity.)

Directions: After the opening prayer at each session, go over the group guidelines. On a sheet of newsprint write the unbracketed statements. Read and discuss each statement. Let people know that questions of clarification are okay. At the end of the discussion, ask people if they are willing to live within these guidelines. As the groups progress, facilitators and participants may add to this list.

These guidelines are especially important in congregations that have experienced clergy sexual abuse because often these congregations are confused about boundaries—what is okay and what is not. Guidelines make it safe and build trust.

Healing the Congregation

SESSION ONE

Dimensions of Congregational Healing

The first session of this curriculum is built around The Rev. Chilton Knudsen's, The Healing Wheel. The focus for this session is for people to understand the variety of feelings that are evoked in the aftermath of clergy sexual abuse and to accept this variety of feelings as a normal part of the response to clergy sexual response. The final goal of this session is to help people understand that all people respond and process the information about clergy sexual abuse differently. There is no one correct process, there is only our own individual response — which is correct for each of us.

What You Need

For this session you need one copy of the wheel for each person (with only the bold type feeling words showing). You will need the copy of the wheel with the notations. You will also need paper and pens, a candle and matches. You need an easel with newsprint and markers.

Logistics (refer to this section also for Sessions Two, Three, Four and Five)

Arrive early.

Set chairs in a circle. If having coffee and hot water for tea seems like a comfort to participants (rather than a distraction) and is not a burden for you, it is nice for people as they gather to be able to serve themselves a beverage.

Name tags

Have name tags and suggest to people that they fill out their name tag with their first name written large enough to be read across the room.

Be prepared.

As leaders, it is helpful for you to be ready to greet people. This topic is quite stressful and your full attention to greet people as they arrive will do much to increase participants' comfort level.

Welcome people.

Shake hands. Hugging is probably not a good idea. In a congregation where clergy sexual abuse has taken place often people in the congregation have anxiety about touch. People who may have been victims of past sexual abuse (rape, incest, childhood physical abuse) often are re-experiencing some level of trauma. Physical touch may trigger a response that you or they are unprepared for. If you are a hugger, remember to ask yourself who the hug is for. Remember also that you as a facilitator have the power of the role of leader and, even if asked, people may not

feel able to say no to a hug. It is better to model appropriate touch in this situation, because of people's possible vulnerability.

To Begin the Session

Light a candle

Say, *"Each night as we meet we will light a candle which will shine for us as the presence of God (or the holy). As we meet together, may God's healing grace be each of ours."*

Bible reading

Then move to the reading of the Bible passage.
Read Psalm 138: 1-8

1. I give thee thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing thy praise;
2. I bow down toward thy holy temple and give thanks to thy name for thy steadfast love and thy faithfullness; for thou hast exalted above everything thy name and thy word.
3. On the day I called, thou didst answer me, my strength of soul thou didst increase.
4. All the rules of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, for they have heard the words of thy mouth;
5. And they shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.
6. For though the Lord is high, the Lord regards the lowly; but the haughty the Lord knows from afar.
7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou dost preserve my life; thou dost stretch out thy hand against the wrath of my enemies, and thy right hand delivers me.
8. The Lord will fulfill a purpose for me; thy steadfast love, O Lord, endures for ever. Do no forsake the work of thy hands.

Prayer

"Gracious God, we see your presence in the light of this candle, we hear your presence in the words of the Psalm, we sense your presence in this community of God. Be with us, our guide and our strength, and let us learn to be active stewards of your love. Amen."

Post the group guidelines (see page 7)

- Go over them.
- Ask if everyone can live with them.
- Ask if there are additional suggestions.
- Refer to the norms as necessary during the session.

Introductions

Ask people to introduce themselves by giving their name and telling a reason why they decided to participate in this class. (The co-facilitator might go first to model how you want this done.)

The Healing Wheel — distribute/explain

Now hand out The Healing Wheel. Hand out one copy for each person. (Use the one with the block letters of feelings with the explanations whited out). Have one copy drawn on newsprint and refer to this as you explain each wedge of the wheel. These wedges represent the variety of responses a congregation might have to a trauma. The goal is to lift these responses up, understand them, and then for people to discover their own process. Chilton Knudsen says that, "People understand quite easily most of the wedges, but that anger is difficult, because many people see that anger is a *not OK* feeling because Christians are supposed to be *nice*." As a leader, differentiate between Anger I (focused and blaming) and Anger II (diffuse and global). Also explain to people that anger is a legitimate response to trauma. If we block the appropriate expression and understanding of anger, healing will also be blocked.

As you explain each wedge, ask people if they have felt this way (nod heads or raise hands). Do not stop to discuss or process at this point.

Now give people the **three rules**:

1. People can enter at any point.
2. People can go clockwise, counter clockwise, or can jump across, again and again.
3. This circle tells people that no matter how different they look and feel, they are a unity.

When you have completed the explanation, ask for questions of clarification. Hand out paper and pens and ask people to think about when they first heard about the disclosure of clergy sexual abuse, and then to write in a list the responses they have had since that time. Give them 10 minutes. At 5 minutes, let them know half their time is up.

Their paper will look like this:

- Shock
- Denial
- Anger I
- Bargaining
- Anger II
- Depression
- Denial
- Etc.

Ask people to pair up with another person. Ask them to sit on the same level to share their Healing Wheel process. Remind people of the norms of listening and valuing differences. Remind them also about the norm regarding self disclosure. They may discuss or place their wheel side by side and compare. Are there differences? Are there similarities?

Give people a few minutes to be together. Gather the dyads back together into the whole group. Ask people what they noticed. How are they the same? How are they different? Are any two people's lists the same? What conclusions do you draw from this?

As a leader, you may wish to prompt, but what we are after is a sense that everyone's own Healing Wheel is different and everyone's Healing Wheel is okay.

Now see if you can brainstorm what people have heard in the congregation that might fit into a Congregational Healing Wheel. (Ask people not to mention people's names — only statements or examples of phrases that would fit into each.) Make a large Healing Wheel on newsprint and write in what people say in the appropriate box. You may need to reframe or help people clarify. There may be disagreement about what goes where. If so, simply say, *"All categories may overlap and even blur."* Then write on the line or in two categories, if necessary.

Are there wedges that are emptier or more full than others? What do people see or notice?

Now ask, *"What can we do to minister to each other at this time, with what we now know about our own and our congregation's Healing Wheel?"*

Stress again that all feelings are important, and listening and accepting are two important ministries each person may offer to others as a way of Healing the Congregation.

Closing

Remind people of the date and time of the next meeting. Remind them to be on time and that you will be starting on time as the norm suggests. Hand out next week's reading. Ask people to read it before the next session. Thank people for attending and participating.

Prayer

O God of caring, listening and attending give us acceptance of ourselves and of others. Be with us. Care for us. Care for our church and let is know that we are loved, even when we struggle. Amen.

Blow the candle out.

May this light be in us until we meet again. Amen.

Rev. Denise Tracy
Church Consultant
421 S. Clinton
Oak Park, IL 60302
708-383-3509

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SESSION TWO

Opening Bible Verse

In preparation, review logistics from Session I.

Light candle.
Say, *Each night as we meet we will light a candle which will shine for us as the presence of God (or the holy). As we meet together, may God's healing grace be each of ours.*

Reading 1st Timothy 5:11-17

"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching" for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain," and, "the laborer deserves wages." "Never admit any charge against an elder expect on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality. Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor participate in another's sins; keep yourself pure."

"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments."

"The sins of some are conspicuous, pointing to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. So also good deeds are conspicuous; and even when they are not, they cannot remain hidden."

Prayer

Gracious God, tonight let us open our hearts and minds to understand ourselves and others even when we may not agree with our own or their responses. Teach us to be open. Amen.

Share the Group Guidelines/Code of Ethics

Tonight we are going to discuss Larry Graham's, Healing the Congregation. As a leader, pick some questions to use as starters for the discussion. Usually the group will respond quickly. In many congregations people have wanted the structure of a safe atmosphere to talk. As discussion ebbs and flows, add another question from the list.

1. Why would telling the abuse story be important to a congregation to heal itself?

2. How do you feel about your church in the precursor - secret phase?

3. Did you see any interpersonal behavior at any point that you since have re-reflected upon and seems different to you now?

4. How is it possible for a church to miss seeing this behavior?

5. Has your church entered the Discovery-Chaos Phase?

6. How long do you think this phase lasts?

7. Polarization and awareness are two elements of the Discovery-Chaos stage. What do you see as characterizations of these elements?

8. How will you know when this phase is over?

9. The third stage is the Recover and Building stage. What is your leadership doing to help your church prepare for this stage?

10. If recovery is forced, it seems to be that the pain goes underground. Talk about this dynamic. How can your church avoid this stage?

11. How might your church work on its self esteem while dealing with these serious and painful dynamics?

12. Where is your church right now in these phases?

13. Where are you in these stages?

14. It is tempting to want the pain to be over and push for healing too soon. Talk about the 5 polar tensions. How are they impacting your church presently?

15. How is your church incorporating the abuse event into its history?

16. The Recovery-Resolution Phase will be a relief. How will you know you are there personally? How will you know the church is there?

For next week, read or re-read up to Page 45 in Is Nothing Sacred?

Blow the candle out.
May this light be in us until we meet again. Amen.

Let us Pray
Loving God, be with us. We need you, our church needs you, the world needs you. We need solace, we need compassion, we need to be forgiven - so that we may give solace, compassion and forgiveness. Help us be good stewards of your teachings. Amen.

Prepared by:
Denise Tracy
Church Consultant
421 S. Clinton
Oak Park, IL 60302
708-383-3509

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SESSION THREE

Is Nothing Sacred?, Part I

In preparation review logistics from Session I.

Light candle.
Say, *Each night as we meet we will light a candle which will shine for us as the presence of God (or the holy). As we meet together, may God's healing grace be each of ours.*

"Finally, brother and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 4:8-9

Let us pray

Gracious Creator, let us be mindful of the pain and confusion that may lead us to understanding and acceptance. Give us the creativity to find new ways to find grace even in the worst grief we must bear. Let our spirits unite in you and my your peace find a home in our lives. Amen.

Share the Guidelines/Code of Ethics (for review, refer to page 7)

Discussion Questions

1. Marie Fortune's book is a case study of a church where the pastor sexually abused his female parishioners. How did you respond to the book?

2. What feelings came to the surface as you read?

3. How did you react to the Rev. Peter Donovan as a personality before you knew the sexual abuse aspect of his ministry? How did this change after you read about his abuse of women?

4. How did you respond to the women? Was there any one woman that you had more or less sympathy towards? Why?

5. Do you think it is easier to blame women in our culture than men? Why, why not?

6. Was Newburg like your town? Was First Church like your church? Were Peter Donovan and the women similar to people you know?

7. What does it mean to be a victim? Have you ever been a victim? How did you feel? What helped you recover?

8. On Page 37, in the last paragraph, Fortune describes the "dimensions of ethical violation that result from pastoral misconduct." These are: exploitation of vulnerability, misuse of authority, absence of authentic consent, and creation of dual relationships. In addition, there were the instances of sexual assault, a gross violation of ethics in any relationship."

   How did you respond to this list? Do you feel it is a valid representation? Why, why not?

9. If a pastor initiates a sexual relationship with a parishioner during counseling or during a time they are working together in the church and she responds - Is this consent? Why or why not?

10. As you read this far in the book, have any of your feelings changed? Your thoughts? Your responses?

11. What questions would you like to ask Peter Donovan? any of the women? How do you think they would answer you?

12. If you knew someone who had been a victim, what might be some healing responses to them?

For next week, complete reading - Is Nothing Sacred?

Let us pray

Gracious God, tonight let us leave this place knowing we are on a journey which we hope will deepen our faith. Help us to face ourselves and others with honesty, trust and love. Give us both compassion and strength. Amen.

Blow the candle out.

May this light be in us until we meet again. Amen.

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Denise Tracy
Church Consultant
421 S. Clinton
Oak Park, IL 60302
708-383-3509

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SESSION FOUR

Is Nothing Sacred?, Part II

In preparation, review logistics from Session I.

Light the candle.
Say, *Each night as we meet we will light a candle which will shine for us as the presence of God (or the holy). As we meet together, may God's healing grace be each of ours.*

"And Jesus told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, 'in a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded the people; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'vindicate me against my adversary.' For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor regard the people, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.' And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God vindicate the elect, who cry to God day and night? Will God delay long over them? I tell you God will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Child of Humanity comes, will that one find faith on earth.'" Luke 18:1-8

Prayer

God of Mercy, surround and support us with your love and wisdom. Let us be nurtured toward wholeness, let our questions be surfaced and teach us to be open to the wonder of knowledge. Let us learn to be unafraid of the surprise question or answer in our midst. Let us be amazed. Amen.

Share the Group Guidelines/Code of Ethics (for review, refer to page 7)

Discussion Questions

1. How do you respond to this statement of Marie Fortune's (page 47, Is Nothing Sacred?)

   "The pastoral sex offender does not differ significantly from the secular sex offender. He is manipulative, coercive, controlling, predatory, and sometimes violent. He may also be charming, bright, competent, and charismatic. He is attracted to powerlessness and vulnerability. He is not psychotic, but is usually sociopathic; that is, he has little or no sense of conscience about his offending behaviors. He usually will minimize, lie, and deny when confronted. For these offenders, the ministry presents an ideal opportunity for access to possible victims of all ages."

2. What does it mean for a woman who is vulnerable to become involved with the above described man?

3. How did you react to First Church of Newburg's efforts at responding to the women?

4. How did you react to the judicatory or denominational response?

5. If you had been in charge, what would you have done?

6. On page 67, it describes an action that could have been taken. Would this have been fair for everyone? Why or why not?

7. After reading Chapter 4, the church's response, how do you feel about your church's response?

8. How do you relate to the analogy of the church as a family, the pastor as a parent and the parishioners as family members? If you agree, what does the sexualization of this relationship mean?

9. Do you agree that truth telling and acknowledging the violation must be a part of the process of healing sexual misconduct?

10. If compassion is "suffering with" how could you suffer with the victims in your church?

11. How do you feel about having compassion towards Peter Donovan?

    (It is important if you raise this question that you recognize that some people will feel that the church should forgive the pastoral sexual abuser. It is also important that this may create division in the group.)

    (You may want to have people open their books to pages 114-118 and talk about the elements of Justice Making as prerequisites for forgiveness. Ask people to consider this process as a part of the process of forgiveness.)

12. Were you, or are you tempted, to blame the victim(s) in your church?

13. Charisma (or sex appeal) is what many churches want in a minister. If a minister has charisma and no boundaries, what may the dangers be to both the church and its members?

14. Are there other issues you would like to talk about with this group? What would they be? Would you like to meet more or not?

Hand out Clark article. Ask people to read it for the next session.

Prayer

God of community and communion, we give thanks for your presence among us. We need your grace so that we may recreate a church anew within ourselves and within this congregation. Be with us now and always. Amen.

Blow the candle out.

May this light be in us until we meet again. Amen.

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Session Five

In preparation review the logistics from Session I.

Light the candle.
Say, *Each night as we meet we will light a candle which will shine for us as the presence of God (or the holy). As we meet together, may God's healing grace be ours.*

Read Psalm 25:1-10

"To thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O My God, in thee I trust, let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. Yea, let none that wait for thee be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous."

"Make me to know thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; for thee I wait all the day long."

"Be mindful of thy mercy, O Lord, and of thy steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, or my transgressions; according to thy steadfast love remember me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord!"

"Good and upright is the Lord; therefore the Lord instructs sinners in the way. God leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble God's way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep God's covenant and God's testimonies."

Prayer

As we gather let us be mindful of our healing hearts and souls. May each of us understand and accept our own frailties, may we understand and accept the frailties of others. Give us permission to talk honestly about the limits we need in our church to heal ourselves and our church. Amen.

Share the Group Guidelines/Code of Ethics (for review, see page 7)

Discussion Questions

1. How do you respond to Clark's assertion that the law is "filling a void" in the church? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

2. Do you agree with Clark's analysis that there is a power imbalance between a clergy person and a parishioner? According to Clark, does one have more power and why?

3. Does justice look different from a legal and a religious viewpoint? How?

4. Knowing what you know after your experience with your church and from the material in this curriculum, does your church have a published guideline or a policy that defines the appropriate relationship between a member of the clergy and a congregant? Between clergy and staff? Between volunteers, volunteer staff and congregants?

5. If your church does have such a guideline or policy, is it publicized?

6. If your church does not have such a guideline or policy, do you see any advantages to having one? Any disadvantages?

   Pass out the sheets listing the two policies.

   Policy I is taken from material prepared by The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

   Policy II was created by a congregation for the pastor, its staff and all lay leaders. Members of the professional and support staff as well as every Board Member must agree to abide by this guideline.

7. How do you respond to these two policies? Do you prefer one to another? Why?

8. Some people feel that talking about these policies and clarifying them is uncomfortable and they wish to avoid this discomfort. What do you think?

9. Any suggestions for an alternative guideline or policy?

10. If your church does not have a policy and you think it would be a good idea, who would you talk to and how might you initiate a discussion of this possibility?

Break people into dyads about one half-hour before the end of the meeting. Ask them to talk about:

A. What was the most helpful aspect of this class?

B. What might have been improved?

Give people 10 minutes to talk, let them know at 5 minutes that half their time is up.

Re-gather people. Ask if people would be willing to share their thoughts. Take notes for future reference.

Thank people for taking the time to be present and for their participation.

Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for your healing presence. We thank you for the power of knowledge and for the resiliency of the human spirit. Bless us. Give us hope and strength. Amen.

Blow the candle out.

May this light be in us until we meet again. Amen.

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Denise Tracy
Church Consultant
421 S. Clinton
Oak Park, IL 60302
708-383-3509

Policy I

"Sexual contact between a pastor and a parishioner, client, or employee with whom the pastor has a professional, pastoral relationship is unethical and unprofessional behavior and shall be deemed clergy misconduct. Clergy misconduct involving sexual abuse is defined as sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which the pastor or pastoral counselor takes advantage of the vulnerability of the parishioner, client, or employee by causing or allowing the parishioner, client, or employee to engage in sexual behavior with the pastor or pastoral counselor within the professional relationship."

Policy II

Staff Code of Conduct

- I will speak with respect, candor and honesty in all relationships with other staff and members and the wiser constituency.
- I will respect and support the majority decisions of the Congregation and the Trustees and its Boards.
- I will do nothing to violate the trust of any of those whom we as staff serve.
- I will focus my professional efforts in the mission and the good of the church and not on my personal goals.
- I will seek to regard all persons with equal love and concern and undertake to minister impartially to the needs of all.
- I will hold as sacred all confidences shared with me.
- I will work in a supportive relationship with my colleagues in ministry, offering and receiving counsel in times of need.
- I will treat all people with dignity and will guard against any form of abusive behavior including sexual abuse or sexual harassment, physical abuse, psychological abuse or verbal abuse.
- I will always remember that as long as I serve as a paid staff member or serve in a position of responsibility at this Church my conduct is a reflection on our church and the Church family of ministries; therefore, I will not knowingly engage in any activity that reflects unfavorably upon Church.

- If at any time I find I am having difficulty living within the found of this Code of Conduct, I will voluntarily or at the urging of the Church and Ministry Committee and/or the Trustees, seek professional help. I am aware that if after kindly efforts from the Church and Ministry Committee and/or the Trustees I am unwilling or unable to make satisfactory progress, my repeated offense may be cause for the termination of my employment at Church. Sexual or physical abuse may result in immediate suspension pending investigation and verification of charges.

- The creation of and the enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of the Church and Ministry Committee. Any questions or concerns regarding this policy or the behavior of any staff member may be referred to the Chair of Church and Ministry.

Prepared by:
Denise Tracy
Church Consultant
421 S. Clinton
Oak Park, IL 60302
708-383-3509